

The National Estuary Program was established in 1987 by amendments to the Clean Water Act to identify, restore, and protect nationally significant estuaries of the United States. Unlike traditional regulatory approaches to environmental protection, the NEP targets a broad range of issues and engages local communities in the process. The program focuses not just on improving water quality in an estuary, but on maintaining the integrity of the whole system — its chemical, physical, and biological properties, as well as its economic, recreational, and aesthetic values.

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# Massachusetts Bays



## What Makes the Massachusetts Bays Special?

- Massachusetts Bay and Cape Cod Bay, collectively known as Massachusetts Bays, were selected in November 1990 as an estuary of national significance by the EPA. The Bays have a rich and diverse coastline of salt marshes, tidal flats, beaches, and estuaries that are of immense value to Massachusetts' citizens, plant life and animals.
- Estuaries provide unique habitat for marine life, including commercially important shellfish. Commercial fishing continues to be a multi-million dollar industry in the area.
- Residents and visitors enjoy swimming, boating, birdwatching, and recreational fishing.
- In the Bays area, tourists spend about \$1.5 billion annually and support over 81,000 jobs.

## Why do the Massachusetts Bays Need Special Attention?

- Roughly 3.8 million people live in the Massachusetts watershed. Population is growing and the Bays are jeopardized by coastal development and in upland watersheds from excess levels of nutrients, pathogens, toxics and pressures on fragile coastal habitat.
- Massachusetts lost close to 30% of its original coastline wetlands to development. Other key habitats in the Bays region are steadily degrading due to increased pollution from stormwater runoff, municipal and industrial discharges, and other sources.

## Progress/Goals for the Future

### What Partnership Progress has Been Made?

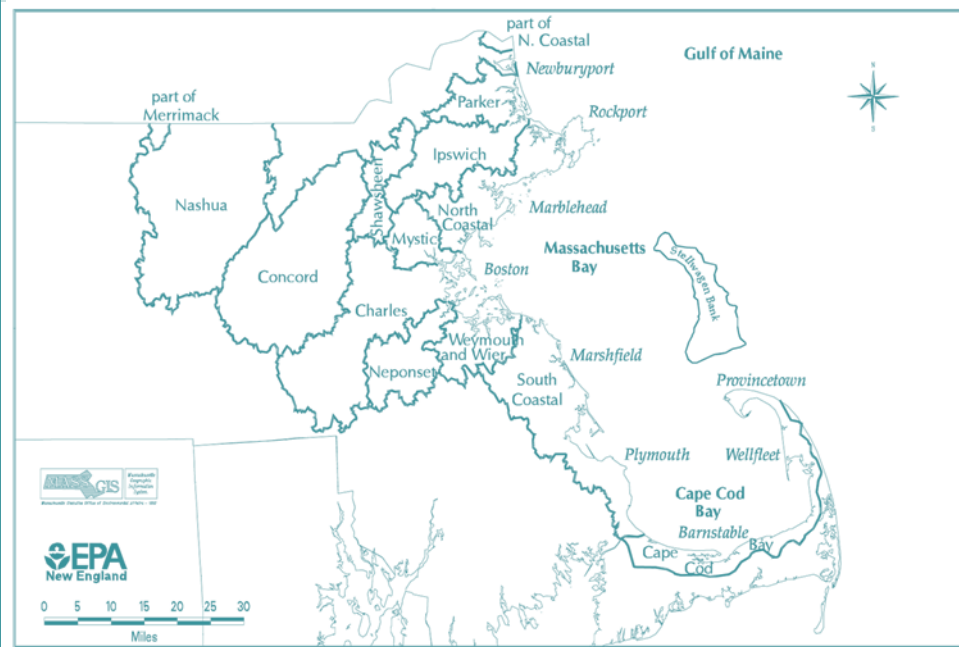
- Led six states and seven NEPs in an August 2003 survey of marine invasive species between Casco Bay, Maine and New York Harbor. A report of findings will be completed in 2004.
- Restored over 100 acres of degraded wetlands in 2003.
- Spearheaded an environmental landscape design demonstration project using only native plants that are water efficient, provide habitat for wildlife, and require less maintenance and minimal chemicals.
- Helped leverage significant stormwater management funding for coastal communities to conduct stormwater assessment and storm drain mapping projects, and to implement stormwater Best Management Practices.
- Contracted with NASA to create a demonstration model to help community planners on Cape Cod visualize how existing zoning and regulations permit development in hazardous coastal areas.
- Continued to recruit, train, and supervise citizen volunteers to monitor the health of the Bays' coastal environment.

### What Major Actions are Planned for 2004?

- Create a Marine Monitoring Network together with several partners. The network will coordinate the efforts of numerous monitoring groups and create a data management system to help us better understand the conditions of the Bays.

(continued)

# Massachusetts Bay



## About the Massachusetts Bays Program:

The MBP is a partnership of citizens, communities, and government, that strives to protect and enhance the coastal health and heritage of Massachusetts and Cape Cod Bays. The Mass Bays region covers over 800 miles of coastline and serves 50 coastal communities. To achieve the MBP's vision of a balanced and healthy environment, the program:

- ▶ provides support and help for local action
- ▶ cultivates environmental education and stewardship
- ▶ develops science-based initiatives
- ▶ facilitates cooperation on local and region-wide projects and programs.



## What Major Actions are Planned for 2004? (continued)

- ▶ Restore tidally restricted wetlands along the coast of the Bays using the Atlas of Tidally Restricted Wetlands.
- ▶ Provide hands-on assistance to local officials on creative land protection techniques such as environmental landscape design, incorporating open space with residential development design, and the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act.
- ▶ Provide technical expertise on stormwater and habitat protection issues to municipal officials via workshops, events, and publications.
- ▶ Host a Massachusetts Bays Symposium for scientists, managers, and legislators to present ten years of trends, review the current condition of the Bays, and develop next steps for action.
- ▶ Produce a *State of the Bays 2004* report to raise the public's awareness of conditions within the Bays.



- ▶ Distribute outreach materials regarding invasive species for the aquatic pet industry, and develop multi-lingual outreach materials.



Photo: Bill Stanton

## Who are the Partners?

EPA New England • Massachusetts EOE/Office of Coastal Zone Management • Regional Planning Agencies: Merrimack Valley, Metropolitan Area and Cape Cod • Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection • U.S. Army Corps of Engineers • University of Massachusetts - Boston • MIT Sea Grant • Massachusetts Water Resources Authority • Mass Audubon - North Shore • Conservation Law Foundation • North & South Rivers Watershed Association • Salem Sound Coastwatch • 50 coastal communities in the Massachusetts Bays area

The MBP has also relied heavily on the participation of local citizens to provide guidance and direction, to identify pressing regional issues and to bring about real change leading to protection of the Bays. To find out more about your estuarine environment and what you can do to get involved, visit [www.massbays.org](http://www.massbays.org).



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Note: EPA-New England offers businesses and municipalities information and assistance to improve compliance with environmental laws and be better stewards of their local environment. Please call to learn how EPA can help.

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